

# WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Staff are asked to acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring any matters of concern about the behaviour of a member of the teaching staff, a member of the support staff, a governor, a person working for externally managed services within the school or a volunteer to the attention of one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads, or the Headmistress or Head of Lower School. Although this can be difficult, it is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

A member of staff may be the first to recognise that something is wrong but may not feel able to express their concerns out of a feeling that this would be disloyal to a colleague or they may fear harassment or victimisation. These feelings, however natural, must never result in a child or young person continuing to be unnecessarily at risk. It is often the most vulnerable children or young people who are targeted. These children need someone to safeguard their welfare.

## **Reasons for whistle-blowing:**

Each individual has a responsibility for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour towards a pupil or a member of staff:

- to prevent the problem worsening or widening
- to protect or reduce risks to others
- to prevent being implicated yourself

## **How to raise a concern:**

- Staff should voice their concerns, suspicions or uneasiness to one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads, or the Headmistress or the Head of Lower School, as soon as they feel they can.
- If the concern is about the Headmistress, the member of staff should contact the Chair of Governors.
- The member of staff reporting his/her concerns will be asked to put them in writing, outlining the background and history, giving names, dates and places wherever they can. A member of staff is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation but will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for the concern.

## **What happens next:**

- The SLT and the governing body have a responsibility to protect the member of staff who has voiced a concern from harassment or victimisation.
- Where there are allegations of criminal activity, the LADO will always be informed, and advice taken, before the school undertakes any investigation.
- The member of staff reporting their concerns will be given appropriate feedback.
- No action will be taken against the member of staff reporting their concerns if the concern proves to be unfounded and was raised in good faith.
- Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 the member of staff may be entitled to raise a concern directly with an external body where the circumstances justify it.
- Malicious allegations may be considered as a disciplinary offence.



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If a member of staff is concerned about any other aspect of staff professional conduct, such as fraud or theft, they should follow the same procedure for reporting.